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Southern District of New York*

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MANHATTAN MAN FACES FEDERAL CHARGES
IN SCHEME TO ILLEGALLY OBTAIN 9/11 GRANT MONEY

JAMES B. COMEY, the United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York, announced that BRYAN FUHR, 31, a resident of Manhattan, was charged today with theft of government money and mail fraud in connection with a scheme to defraud the Lower Manhattan Development Corporation (LMDC) and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) of federal grant money made available after the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks to assist in the revitalization of Lower Manhattan.

A two-count criminal complaint, unsealed today, charged that FUHR devised a scheme to fraudulently obtain money from a grant program established by the Lower Manhattan Development Corporation to retain and attract residents to Lower Manhattan. As the Complaint explains, LMDC was created by the State and City of New York after the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks to coordinate the rebuilding and revitalization of Lower Manhattan,

defined as the area south of Houston Street. To further this goal, the LMDC received HUD grant money to fund the Two-Year Commitment-Based Grant program, which provides money to eligible individuals who make a two-year commitment to live in one of two designated zones in Lower Manhattan.

According to the Complaint, on September 12, 2002, FUHR filled out and submitted an application to the LMDC to obtain money under the Two-Year Commitment-Based Grant. It is alleged that, in this application and according to the terms of the grant, FUHR certified that he currently lived and intended to live at 121 Reade Street in Lower Manhattan for two years. The Complaint alleges that LMDC later approved FUHR's application, which made FUHR eligible to receive approximately \$500 a month in grant money over the two-year period he promised to live at 121 Reade Street.

Nonetheless, the Complaint alleges that, in a letter to the 121 Reade Street management company dated the very same day as FUHR's application to the LMDC - September 12, 2002 - FUHR gave notice of his intent to exit his lease at 121 Reade Street and vacate his apartment on December 1, 2002.

The Complaint further alleges that, although FUHR vacated his residence at 121 Reade Street and was instead purportedly residing at 349 West 21st Street, and although two new tenants had entered into a lease and moved into FUHR's

apartment at 121 Reade Street as of December 1, 2002, FUHR sought to obtain money under LMDC's Two-Year Commitment-Based Grant by falsely representing that he was still residing at 121 Reade Street.

According to the Complaint, in late February of 2003, FUHR stated falsely to the LMDC that he was currently residing at 121 Reade Street and sought to receive the grant money based upon that representation. On March 3, 2003, it is alleged that FUHR went to an LMDC office in Lower Manhattan and stated falsely that he resided at 121 Reade Street when, in fact, FUHR was no longer residing there. After falsely representing his current address at this meeting, the Complaint alleges that FUHR obtained two checks from the LMDC, totaling \$4,500, which constituted the \$500 monthly grant payments to FUHR for the period May 2002 through January 2003 - the time that FUHR claimed to have been living at 121 Reade Street.

If convicted, FUHR faces a maximum of 15 years in prison, and a \$250,000 fine for each count.

Mr. COMEY praised the investigative efforts and cooperation of the Lower Manhattan Development Corporation and the Office of the Inspector General for the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

The charges in the Complaint are merely accusations,

and FUHR is presumed to be innocent unless and until proven guilty.

Assistant United States Attorney RITA M. GLAVIN is in charge of the prosecution.

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